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ABSTRACT

The greeting systems in Nepali are derived from the Hindu ethos and religious culture, and can be traced back to Hindu sacred writing. However, as tied to conventions as they are, these systems are also the product of an interplay of socio-cultural factors. A study found that despite exposure to education and Western culture, Nepali modes of greeting are still traditional in several ways. A Nepali greeting may have three components: an address to the interlocutor, a verbal form, and a nonverbal activity in the form of a number of gestures. The address may precede or follow the verbal form. Sometimes the address and verbal form may be absent altogether. In greetings between members of opposite sexes, hugging and handshakes are unacceptable, and some degree of formality is maintained. Differences in educational level, caste, and role in society appear to create social distance even between friends. Spatio-temporal settings do not appear to influence greeting exchanges except in workplace situations in which colleagues tend to be more formal. Further research is recommended. (Author/MSE)

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Modes of Greetings in Nepali

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Abstract

The greeting systems in Nepali are derived from the Hindu ethos and religious culture, and can be traced back to the Vedas (Hindu Sacred writing). But tied to the conventions as they are, they are also the product an interplay of socio-cultural factors. Has the advancement of education influenced the way people greet each other? Does the exposure to the Western culture have any impact on it? Are traditional riles and customs changing? These are some of several questions the paper attempts to answer. The study conducted found that the modes of greetings are still traditional in several ways. The rules are breaking but the conventional ways seem to have deeply rooted in the society. Education and exposure to the Western world has so far shown very little effect on the way people (specially the people of the opposite sex) greet each other. The difference in education level, caste, and in role in society influence the greeting exchanges. Sex, education, caste, role, etc. still seem to create social distance even between friends.

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Modes of Greetings in Nepali

Introduction

Hinduism, one of the major religions of the world, is also a philosophy and a way of life. The greeting system, although it borrows from the English culture in greeting somebody with good morning, good afternoon, or good evening, (or the equivalents) is basically derived from the Hindu ethos and religious culture. Although historically and demographically there is no justification in restricting the Nepali culture to Hindu culture because of the sizable Buddhist population in Nepal and the historical influences of Mongolian culture on it, this is an attempt restricted to the social forms of greetings that are encountered in ordinary life in Nepal. The greetings that we encounter in the literary front may slightly differ and that also is not considered within the purview of this study.

Pitr devo bhava:
Matr devo bhava:
Acarya devo bhava:
Athithi devo bhava:

(Let your father, mother, teacher and guest be [like] God to you) is the Hindu ideal traced back to the Vedas(Hindu sacred writing) and that has immense influence on the greeting system that has developed throughout the Aryan civilization.

In his review of salutation etiquette in various cultures, Hopkins (1934), writes that a typical Tibetan (Tibet is situated in the north of Nepal.) greeting

[salutation] consists of sticking out the tongue and pulling the right ear while making a slight bow at the same time. In modern Nepali, a greeting does not include all of this. However, some of the non-verbal or gestural behaviors do form a part of the greeting etiquette.

A typical greeting exchanged between friends in the Indian subcontinent today is illustrative in the Hindi poem given below:

do premi mile
do hath jude
do shir jhuke
char hoth khile
rom rom harshe
(Anonymous)

Translation: When two friends meet, they greet each other by putting their palms together with fingers upward and bowing with a smile on face. A Nepali greeting, is very similar to this, if not the same.

The Greeting Phraseology

A Nepali greeting phrase usually consists of two parts (i) a form a address, and (ii) a term of greeting. So far as address forms are concerned, certain forms are followed by "ji" which explicitly implies some respect for the addressee:

Preceding Address Forms	**Examples**	**Participants**
a) First names	Hariji Gopalji Shyamji	Between equals [friends]
b) Last names	Giriji Basnetji Gurungji	Between Equals [formal situations]

c) Reverential titles	guruji panditji baidyaji	to respectful person
d) Kinship terms	babuji kakaji mamaji	people of blood relations

The last category may be observed in the speech of the people who are under the influence of Hindi, a principal language of the neighboring India. In typical Nepali, however, the kinship terms of address go without any such attachments or tags. So, buba (father), muma (mother), dai (elder brother), etc. are not followed by "ji".

Nepali makes uses of "ji" and "jyu" differently. Though they are used interchangeably in very many cases, people use "jyu" in formal situations, or when the interlocutor assumes a higher social status or is a respectful person. "ji" is used when the relationship between the initiator and his interlocutor is relatively new and\or they no longer feel that they have to show respect for one another but some degree of formality still has to be maintained.

Similarly, certain borrowed titular terms are usually followed by "saheb":

1. **Officials Titles**	**Address Forms**
a) Army titles	kaptan saheb major saheb karnel saheb
b) Police titles	inspector saheb IG saheb
c) Government titles	judge saheb manager saheb

It should be pointed out here that wherever a translation of the titles are used, only "ji" or "jyu" is usually permissible, e.g.,; mantriji (minister), sabhapatiji (president), adhyachaji (chairman), pradhan pancaji (mayor).

2. Educational/ professional Titles

- professor saheb
- lecturer saheb
- master saheb

3. Occupational Titles
- manager saheb
- engineer saheb
- doctor saheb

The titles of so called low professions/ occupations are used without any such attachments:
- mistri [plumber]
- damai [tailor by caste]
- suchikar [tailor by profession]
- nau [barber]
- mali [gardener]
- sarki [cobbler by caste], etc.

In the educational circle, the term "sir" replaces almost all titles. Nepalese students and even junior teachers never address their teachers or colleagues by their first names. In formal situations, their last names are often preceded by their professional titles or "Shriman" [Mr.], such as Shriman Shrestha, Dr. Adhikari, Prof. Malla, etc.

Between husbands and wives, husbands often address their wives by their first names, it is socio-culturally not permissible for the wives to call their husbands by their first names. They often have to find other ways to address their husbands. In some castes, they use the term "hajur", but in most cases, they use expressions equivalent to <u>son's</u>

or daughter's [often their names] father. So the expressions sounds like "Ram ko buba!" [Ram's father] or "Neera ko buba!" [Neera's father], etc.

The greeting terms in Nepali cover a wide range of formulaic expressions. The following five terms are the most used terms to extend greetings: (1) Namaste, (2) Namaskar, (3) Pranam, (4) Dandvat, and (5) Darshan. Among these, the first two terms are formal forms and symmetrical in that the responses are fixed and the same as the greetings, e.g.,

namaste--namaste
namaskar--namaskar

The last three terms are also formal terms but may be called asymmetrical in that the response is variable. Sometimes, depending on the relationship between the greeting initiator and the interlocutor, no response is necessary. The interlocutor then just makes gestural indication that the greeting has been acknowledged.

pranam [which means 'I bow to you']--In response the interlocutor may put the hands together, raise a hand to show he heard the greeting or he may just nod his head once in order to show acknowledgement.

dandvat [which means I prostrate before you]--In response the interlocutor may say some words of blessings such as kalyanam [or do good and be well] or he may raise his hand to express silent blessings or just nod his head once in the acknowledgement.

Darshan [It means I pay you my respect]-- This is same as pranam except that this is used in the elite castes only. The response may be the same as the greeting that is darshan [this happens between equals], or the interlocutor, as in pranam and dandvat, shows some kind of acknowledgement. Because of its symmetrical as well as asymmetrical nature, I would prefer to call it semi-symmetrical.

The symmetrical greetings are also exchanged between people of equal status whereas the asymmetrical greetings are only exchanged between people of two levels or statuses.

Apart from these most used terms, there are several other terms that are not exactly greeting terms but they replace greeting terms in every day informal encounters.

- ke cha? [How are you?]
- sanchai?[Are you well?]
- ke hal cha? [How are you?]
- anandai? [Are you all right]
- thik thak? [Is everything ok?],
- aramei, etc.

Predictability and Indexicality

Given a context, it can be predicted what kind of greetings will be exchanged between two people of equal status. In the workplace, for example, when two colleagues meet, the exchange of greetings that takes place is either the first category, namaste--namaste, or the second, namaskar -- namaskar depending the relationship between the two. So far as the initiation of the greeting in a given situation is concerned, whoever is junior in rank, age, or

is lower in caste, profession or status is expected to greet the other party first. If the junior party, for some reason, does not initiate the greeting, then the conversation takes place without any exchange of greetings.

Similarly, when a student visits his teacher, the student is always expected to greet his teacher by saying either "pranam" [a rather traditional term now] or "namaskar". The response then may be the same term or the teacher may choose to make a gestural indication of his acknowledgement.

Greetings between two people do not change through spatial and temporal variables. That is to say, whether they meet at home or college, at workplace or in the market, the same greeting terms are exchanged. The formality of situation, however, do affect the greeting terminology. This is discussed in the next section.

Address forms are not discussed hereafter as the primary focus of the paper is on the greeting forms only. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to describe the different forms of greetings that the speakers of Nepali employ in various sociolinguistic situations.

Greeting Kinemes

Every culture has its own set of formulaic greeting kinemes. Kissing, embracing, bowing, saluting with hands, handshake, folding hands, prostration, touching feet, etc are some of the most common kinemes. In the Nepali culture, prostration, bending on feet, touching feet, folding hands,

shaking hands (this one especially in the people of modern generation), raising hands, smile and nod are common. The last four gestural greetings are more common in the people of the recent generation where as the first four are somewhat traditional and are more common in the people of older generation.

It is likely that kinemes are independent of verbal greetings accompanied by gestural behaviors or vice-versa. However, verbal greetings accompanied by gestural behaviors are also an everyday phenomenon.

Sociolinguistic Variables

The sociolinguistic variables in greetings can be broadly classified into four categories:

1. The Participants

The variables relating to the participants (the greeting initiator and the interlocutor) are of two types:

a) The social identity of the participants; their - age, sex, education, caste/religion, class, role, profession/ occupation, etc.

b) The nature of the relationship between the participants: -formal/informal, kin/nonkin, superior/inferior, intimate/ non-intimate

2. The spatio-temporal settings

The spatio-temporal settings are: i) the locale: - initiator's home / interlocutor's home, school/college, workplace, temple, etc. ii) the time or occasion:-morning,

day, evening, occasion of happiness, occasion of sorrow, and interval of time

3. The channel of greeting

There are two channels through which a set of greetings can be exchanged: a) verbal-oral/written b) non-verbal [gestural / body language], etc.

4. The intent of greeting

The intention or purpose for which a set of greetings is exchanged may have an effect on what is exchanged. Some of the intention may be:-apology, condolence, seeking favour, flattering, opening a conversation, etc. [For the detailed discussion of the variables, see Mehrotra 1985, Pp. 90-114]

For the purpose of this paper, I limited my study to some of the most pertinent variables related to participants-intimacy, sex, education, caste, and role. From the spatio-temporal variables, I selected home, work-place, and temple (religious place) only.

Greeting Modes in Other Cultures

This section of the paper is based on the review of the related literature and the answers received from the classmates in response to the questionnaire sent through the E-mail system. The notable research studies that were reviewed were that of Hopkins (1934), Law (1948), Schegloff (1972), Kunz and Woolcott (1976), Schiffrin (1977), Nilsen (1984), Mehrotra (1985).

South Asia

Hopkins (1934), confining his study to the epic data wrote that a greeting in the Hindu tradition consists of folding hands i.e., putting palms and fingers together with fingers upward against the forehead and then bowing low (known as pranam mudra) or of anjali in which hands are cupped with fingers up against the forehead accompanied by a low bow (P-369). Soldiers and maids must do the kornish on their knees before giving any message to their masters (P-374). The verbal greeting is usually a mutual inquiry as to health (P-376).

In Hindi (one of the principal languages in Northern India), the ethnography of greeting involves an opening move in the form of an statement, a gesture (non-verbal behaviour) and a response (Mehrotra 1985 P. 81). The statement usually consists of an address form and the greeting phrase. The social occasion (spatio-temporal setting) provides the structuring context of what is exchanged as a greeting and with who. Non-verbal behaviour

forms an indispensable part of any greeting exchange so much so that a verbal expression of the greeting without a gestural activity such as a slight bow, nod, a smile or eye language may be considered inappropriate, incomplete or sometimes rude. (Ibid.). A typical example of Hindi greeting will be:

guruji (address) pranam! (greeting phrase) [accompanied by folding of hands (non-verbal behaviour)].

If the initiator of the greeting in the situation above does not fold his hand, he will be considered rude.

In Malayalam (one of the regional languages of the Southern India), greeting phrases usually vary depending on the status and caste of the addressee. The Hindi epithet 'ji' is not normally used in Malayalam except in the case of national leaders like 'Gandhiji' or in the case of addressing spiritual personalities with an epithet 'Swamiji' (Lord) which is taken as part of the name when applied into Malayalam. Left to itself, 'ji' is not a reverential title in Malayalam or in any or the Dravidic languages.

But, some of the reverential titles are still used to address the spiritual leaders and ascetics when addressed with reverence. For example, the chief priests in Hinduism are addressed 'Swamy', 'Swamiji' or 'Acharya'('guru' or teacher)'Thirumeni or Thirumulpad (literally, 'holy body' which is comparable to 'your holiness' and such titles in English). The title for a Christian bishop is 'thirumeni', a title or term that lower castes and inferiors use when

addressing a male member of the Brahmin (members of the Hindu priestly class) as it is used today in Malayalam. Women of the high class were addressed with some reverential terms like 'Amma', 'Ammal or 'kochamma'. Many of these terms can etymologically be traced back to Sanskrit for their origin. It is sign of respect when lower caste members address the high caste members with their caste epithets after their name (Namboodiri, Nair, Menon, Ayyar, etc. as the case may be.).

Official titles and educational titles are used without any tags like 'sahib' or 'ji' in Malayalam. In some cases 'sir' is added after some of the official titles. For example, Inspector Sir, Doctor Sir, Engineer Sir, etc.

Occupational titles have almost disappeared in Kerala. The so-called low professions or occupations were practised by the lower classes or members of the lower castes in the past. There were many such groups like asari(carpenter), musari(potter), kollan(blacksmith), thattan(goldsmith), marar(drummer at the temple), etc. And the lower caste members are expected to greet the high caste members before the beginning of conversation. When untouchability was practised as a social norm the people without the caste system were not supposed to mingle with the high castes in any way. Even the sight of the untouchables would defile the caste members. Education and political awareness among the lower classes leave very few vestiges of the old caste system which in turn influences the modes of greeting.

As in Nepali, In Malayalam too, the member of the lower caste or lower status should greet the high caste member or the superior first. This superiority can be that of age, status, caste, class, authority, etc. If the greeting does not come from the bottom, it is avoided. In most cases where there is a big gap between the one who greets and the one who is greeted it is not a reciprocal greeting that is exchanged, but an acknowledgement or a nod of acceptance.

Between husbands and wives, husbands address their wives using first names, whereas the wives are supposed to refer to their husbands using some indirect address forms, except in a very few cases where the couple have been exposed very much to western education and western practices.

The greeting forms in Malayalam: There are a number of formulaic expressions or terms used to greet people in Malayalam. They are slightly different from those used in Nepali.

namaste and *namaskaram* are the commonest among these greeting forms. In most cases, especially between equals they are responded with the same forms. Literally they mean 'I bow to you' or 'my bow (of respect) to you'. *vanakkam* is another formula used in greeting somebody in Malayalam. It is same as *namaste* and it means something like 'obedience' or 'respect' (literally it means 'bow').

North America

Law (1948) writes that in Aztecs sets of greetings forms are selected on the basis of the sex, age, and mutual relationship of the individuals concerned (P-43). Depending on the formality of the situation, either of the participants may greet the other first. The initiator begins by ensuing an appropriate gestural activity and his verbal words at the same time (P-45).

So far as the distance between the participants is concerned, they do not greet each other until they are close enough to exchange greetings (P-47). If the initiator is also a visitor, then he must exchange appropriate greetings before he sits down. When there are several people together, the initiator must greet the most important person in the group [in terms of role and status] first, and continue his greeting in the descending order(P-48).

Ordinarily, no handshake is used in the exchange of greetings. However, due to the influence of the Mexican culture nearby, a common handshake is being introduced into the society (P-46).

In English (the US), friends usually great each other by their first names irrespective of their social role or status. They might even use each other's nick names depending on the intimacy of their relationship. The extent to which they observe intimacy determines the forms of greeting exchanges. Two persons if they are friends but

still are formal in their relationship, for example, may use--

Hi! or Hello! ...> [name]

In the intimate and less formal circles, they may say:

Hey! ...[name] How's it going? or

Hey! What's up?

The verbal greeting exchanges are usually followed by a hearty handshake if the interlocutor is a man, a kiss if the person is a woman. The people of two sexes may also hug each other.

The interval of time does not effect their ways of greeting or the forms of greeting. In the Afro-American culture, however, the interval of time may make a difference in the use of greeting phraseology. For example, if the interval time is long, the addresser and the addressee may switch to formal terms and use Mr. or Ms. and the last names unless they are really very intimate.

Two persons, when they are introduced for the first time, usually exchange the same expression of greeting, i.e.,

Hello! How do you do?	Hello! How are you?
Hello! How do you do	Hello! How are you?

'How do you do?' and 'How are you?' in these cases are statements rather than questions, and therefore do not require an answer as such.

In workplace settings, the employees usually greet their boss by using the expressions like:

Good	Morning Afternoon Evening	Mr. or Ms. ...> [last name]

The rule is, however, breaking. More and more people tend to be less formal with their boss. They become friends no matter what role in that setting they assume and greet each other using first names. As one of the respondents put it: "Friendship negates all hierarchy differences." In the American colleges and universities, for example, it is perfectly acceptable to greet professors by their first names, a practice Asian students never feel comfortable with.

To sum up, the forms of greetings to be exchanged depends on the intimacy and spatial settings, on how close a friendship is and where the interaction takes place. In general, Americans tend to exchange Hi! or Hello! except in formal settings. A person may not use the terms Hi! or Hello! to address a dean or president of a school in the school, but he might well use it if they are friends and meet in more relaxed settings.

'Good Morning!', 'Good Evening!', etc. are appropriate for everyone but they sound stilted, except in the most formal of circumstances, or if the person does not know the other person well, or does not want to know the other person.

Schegloff (1972) found that people used greeting exchanges as conversational opening markers. Greeting

exchanges between strangers indicate one is interested in conversing with another.

Kunz and Woolcott (1976) are of the view that greeting, a reciprocal activity, is " upwardly mobile activity" (P-269). That is to say, there is a well understood tendency that persons who think that the other party is somewhat higher in status, and that maintaining the relationship is for their own benefit, usually initiate the greeting.

Addresses in the greetings also takes various forms. Friends of equal status who have become intimate and therefore, informal in their relationship usually use first names. Friends of equal status who are still formal in their relationship use formal honorifics such as Mr., Dr., Prof. etc. with the last names of the other party, and expects the same. This is also true of persons greeting persons of higher status. Persons greetings persons of lower status use the interlocutors' first names, but expects formal honorifics on their own part (P-270).

Schiffrin (1977) writing about the rituals observed by individuals before opening a conversation, says that before any (social) interaction occurs, individuals cognitively [categorically as well as biographically] recognize each other. Such a recognition is ritually required (P-680). Greetings occur after such identification rituals. After identification, the participating individuals both understand that further access is ritually and socially permissible. Greetings, thus, are access displays, and

signify social recognition (P-681). Such a social recognition implies knowledge of specific social and cultural expectations and obligations, and is required for social interaction. The requirement is fulfilled when further accessibility is acknowledged. It is the potential increase in the accessibility that generates openings between acquainted individuals (P-692).

Nilsen (1984) while studying greetings and salutations in writing, found that more and more people were inclined to use sex-neutral forms for greetings, and that females were more inclined to use sex-neutral greetings than males (P-245).

Europe

In Yugoslavia, Spain and some other Mediterranean countries, if two people are real friends, then the status and role in the society usually do not play any role in the greeting exchanges. Intimate friends normally greet each other very warmly by hugging and kissing. As for kissing, in some regions they kiss twice, whereas, in other regions they kiss thrice, each time on the opposite cheek. Hugging or kissing is then followed by oral expression of pleasure and inquiry about the welfare.

Two friends who are not very intimate may just shake hands. Depending on the formality, embarrassing moments do arise when two people meet and spend a moment calculating whether they should kiss each other or just shake hands.

North East Asia

In Pilipino and Ilocano (the Philippines), intimacy, status, role, temporal settings, spatial settings, etc. do not play any role at all in the greeting exchanges. The most used form of greeting is:

kumusta! [Hello! How are you?]

If a person has not seen his her friend for a long time, then the greeting form used is :

kumusta na [Hello! How are you these days]

In the Japanese culture, however, social hierarchy of people play an important role in determining the forms of greetings. The people of higher status or role usually wait for greetings from the persons of the lower status and role. the greeting forms also varies from one situation to another. The people of lower status usually greet other people by saying:

1. ohayo gozakimasu [Good morning, Sir or Madam]
2. Konnichiwa [Good Afternoon]
3. Konbanwa [Good Evening]

For a response, the addressees usually repeat the same phrase. In the case of [1], they might just repeat the first part of the expression which is "ohayo'. They may also respond to a greeting by:

[name), genki [(name) How are you?]

It is perfectly acceptable to say nothing to respond to a greeting but smile or bow.

Methodology

Method

Five native speakers of Nepali studying in Columbia University participated in this study. Three of them are at Teachers College, one of them in the School of Business Management and one in the School of Law. Two of the five subjects were female. As the purpose of the study was to find out what forms of greetings are exchanged between people of equal status, these subjects in my view, were ideal subjects for this study because all of them were graduate students at the moment they responded to the questionnaire.

All subjects have completed one or more years of their stay in the United States. I acknowledge that their stay in an English speaking country might have influenced their modes of greeting exchanges. Handshake, for example, is not a typical greeting mode in Nepali and is usually common among the people having some exposure to the Western culture one way or another. However, given the limited scope of this paper, I confined myself to the forms of greeting exchange only, not their origin and causes.

Tools and Procedure

All subjects were asked to fill out a written questionnaire consisting 15 conversational situations. A blank followed each of the situations where the respondents were asked to record their responses. The subjects were asked to assume that they were the initiators of the

greeting exchanges. For the sake of convenience, I requested them to write their greeting forms in Nepali.

As it was said earlier, non-verbal (gestural) behaviors form an integral and perhaps an important part of Nepali greetings. In each of the situations, therefore, the subjects were asked to record the gestural activity (if any) that they thought they would do as a part of their greeting exchanges. The situations in the questionnaire include-intimacy, sex, education, role, caste, spatio-temporal settings, channel, etc.

Each subject was given plenty of time to fill out the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Analysis

The greeting forms as the respondents filled out in the questionnaire were tabulated, and then percentage of their occurrence was calculated. For example, if four of the five subjects said they would use "namaste" in a given situation, it was reported as 80% of the subjects using the form to exchange greeting in that situation. This was done for each of the categories of the sociolinguistic variables. The sex differences in the non-verbal form of greetings were also analyzed.

Findings

1. Participants

The table below summarizes the responses related to sociolinguistic variables-intimacy, sex, education, caste, role:

Figure-1: Sociolinguistic Variables participants:
(Figures in Percentage)

	Namaste Namaskar	Ke cha Sanchai	expected to be greeted	ramram darshan	none
Intimate					
Man to man		100			
Woman to man	60	40			
Non-intimate					
Man to man	100				
Woman to man	60	40			
Sex					
Man to woman	100				
Woman to woman		100			
Education					
Same	40	60			
Lower	60	40			
Caste					
Low to high	60	40			
High to low		100			
Role					
Low to high	60	40			
High to low		40		60	

As it can be inferred from the data, persons of equal status in the intimate circumstances usually began their greeting exchanges informally i.e., with such informal forms as *ke cha*? or *sanchai*? which means "Are you all right?". In the non-intimate situation, however, 60% of the greetings began with formal exchanges of *namaste* or *namaskar*.

Male respondents, when they were greeting a women began with *namaste* or *namaskar*. The women, however, tended to be more informal in greeting other women of equal status and

began with *ke cha*? or *hal khabar kecha*? meaning "How are you?" or "Are you all right?"

People of the same education and the same caste greeted each other with informal terms. However, persons of lower education and caste maintained formality and used *namaste* or *namaskar* when they were addressing persons of higher education and caste.

Most people assuming higher role in society or administration expected their interlocutors to greet them first. 40% of such people greeted their interlocutors informally. On the other hand, 60 % of the people of lower role preferred to greet their interlocutors with *namaste* and *namaskar*.

2.Spatio-temporal Settings

The table below shows greetings exchanged in the various spatial and temporal settings:

Figure-2: Spatio-temporal variables:
(Figures in Percentage)

	Namaste Namaskar	ke cha sanchai	darshan ramram	expect to be greeted	none
Spatial					
Initiator's		100			
Work-place	60	40			
Temple		80	20		
Temporal					
Morning	40	60			
Evening	40	60			

The data shows that the people of equal status maintained formality in greeting each other by 60% in their

work-place situation. In other two cases i.e., initiator's place and temple, participants greeted each other informally using expressions such as *ke cha*? or *sanchai*?. In the temple situation 20 % of the greetings consisted of terms pertinent to the place such as *ramram*, *jai shankar*, etc.

The time of the day did not influence the form of greetings exchanged. The participants greeted using such terms as *ke cha*? etc. by 60 %. 40% of the participants, however, preferred *namaste*.

3. Non-verbal Greetings

Figure-3: Non-verbal Behaviors:
(Figures in percentage)

	handshake	Handsfold	one-hand gesture	hug	smile	none
Intimacy/Sex						
Man to man	60			40		
Woman to woman	20	40			40	
Woman to man		60			40	
Man to woman		100				
Non-intimate						
Man to man	20	60	20			
Woman to man		100				
Woman to woman			20		80	
Man to woman		100				
Education						
Same	60				20	
To lower			20		40	40
Caste						
Low to high		60			40	
High to low					40	60
Role						
Low to high		60			40	
High to low					40	60
Spatial						
Initiator's		60			40	
Workplace		60			40	
Temple		60			40	
Temporal						
Morning			60		40	
Evening			60		40	

It is perfectly acceptable in Nepali to greet someone of any rank or status in most situations-formal or informal by just making non-verbal gestures such as handsfold, one hand gesture, etc. But often, non-verbal behaviors form a part of the total greeting exchanges.

So far as the formality of these behaviors is concerned, hugging (or embracing, only between people of the same sex) someone is less formal but also less common than handshake. Handshake is less formal than one-hand gesture and occurs only between people of the same sex. The one-hand gesture is more casual than handshake. Handsfold is the most formal behavior of all.

In the present study, most people in the intimate situations preferred handshake. People greeting other people of the same or lower education preferred. In the cases of caste, role and spatial setting, whether they were greeting other people of higher caste or lower, of higher role or lower, whether they greeting in their own home, at workplace, or temple, they preferred handsfold by 60%. one hand gesture was preferred in the park. The preference is obvious because people are more casual and do not feel the necessity of coming near to handshake or embrace.

Women respondent preferred to smile in most cases as a form of non-verbal behavior.

Discussion

Modes of greetings are tied to conventions. At the same time they are the product of an interplay of factors characterizing the socio-cultural life of people. With the advancement of education and exposure to the Western world, the forms of greetings and their use have been modified. How people greet each other has changed a great deal specially in urban areas. However, some traditional rules of greeting are still observed. handshake and hugging between sexes are still socially unacceptable. In my study too, none of the subjects preferred handshake or hugging when they greeted people of other sex. Furthermore, people of different sexes maintain some degree of formality when they greet each other in Nepali. Similarly, the difference in education level, caste and in role in society influence the way people exchange greetings. Sex, education, caste and role seem to create social distance even between friends.

The spatio-temporal settings do not seem to bring any difference in the greeting exchanges except in the workplace situations in which colleagues tend to be more formal.

Summary

A greeting in Nepali is three fold-an address to the interlocutor, a verbal form and a non-verbal activity. The address form may precede or succeed the verbal form. Sometimes, the address as well as the verbal forms may be absent all together. In that case, a non-verbal activity is

observed in its full accord. In this study I found that the sociolinguistic variables related with participants are more striking in causing differences in the greeting exchanges than the spatio-temporal variables. This has been a very modest study carried out on a very limited scale. I cannot, therefore, generalize the extent to which the socio-cultural factors of the participants characterize the forms of greetings exchanges. But it certainly opens questions for further investigation. Some of the questions for further research will be:

1. How do the social characteristics of the participants reflect on the use of Namaste and Namaskar in Nepali?
2. What forms of informal greetings and/or gestural behaviors are exchanged in what kind of intimate and informal social situations?
3. Is there a definite pattern of greeting between the people of two different statuses, and between the people of the same status?
3. Is there any difference in the greeting patterns of educated and uneducated people?
4. Do the people of one caste greet among themselves differently than with the people of another caste? etc.

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Questionnaire

Male/Female_____

Age Group Below 25_____
26 to 35_____
36 to 45_____
Above 45_____

Caste (optional)_____

Education_____

The following are some brief situations calling for a greeting in each case. Please assume that you are the person who greets the other person first in each situation. Please specify the form of greeting and also the non-verbal (gestural) behavior (if any) that accompanies the greeting in each case. For the sake of convenience, we request you that you respond to the questionnaire in the Nepali language.

1. You are on your way back home from work. You meet Hari. He is a close friend of yours. You see him first:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

You meet Shyam in a similar situation. You have met Shyam just once at the bus station when your cousin introduced you to him. You see him first and have to greet:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

2. You are on your way back home from work. You meet Rita. She is a close friend of yours. You see her first and want to greet her:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

You meet Manju in a supermarket. You have met her just once in the library, and therefore, have an acquaintance with her:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural)activity_____

3. You have a Bachelor's degree. Gopal who is a friend has finished his Bachelor's degree recently. While You are waiting for a city bus at a bus stop you see him.

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

You are a medical doctor working in a city. While visiting your home town, you see Shashi, your class mate who dropped from the school:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

4. You are Nau. Ramesh who is a friend is Chhetri. You see him at a tea stall.

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

You are Bahun. Ravi, a friend, is Tharu. You see Ravi at a grocery store.

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

5. Prakash, your classmate in school, is now a vice-consul at a consulate. You are a typist in a local law firm. On a Saturday evening, you see him at the Majestic Theater:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

Subhash, who was a classmate of yours, is a secretary in the department of Linguistics in a college. You [illegible] one of the vice-presidents of a different college. You see him at a local shopping center:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural) activity_____

6. You are working in the flower garden in front of your house. You see Ranjan a friend, passing by:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal (gestural activity_____

You are at a local temple for a Saturday worship. You see a neighbor:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal_____

You are a course instructor at a college. While going to one of your classes you see Deepak, a colleague at the same university:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal_____

7. You are going to a Park for the morning walk. You see Chandra, a friend, coming along:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal_____

You meet Shanti, a co-worker, at an evening get together:

You_____
_____

Non-verbal_____